

764 the jingling of silver, probably bracelets, beads, rings, and other jewelry. It is said that hollow trees and the limestone caves that are so common in the hills of Burma and Siam, contain many such hidden treasures. In the Pegu Hills the people appear to bury the relics of their dead wherever fancy dictates and to pay no further attention to the spot. Indeed, as a whole the Karen raise no monuments over their dead. When the remains of a woman are buried, not only her trinkets and ornaments are buried with her, but also her pigs and fowls which, as her peculiar property, are killed and deposited with her relics.

766 Both in the hills and on the plains it is the custom to dig up
775 the bones of the dead who have been carried off by epidemics, as well as of those who have died at inconvenient times, and hold ceremonies over them. It is said that in Shwegyin December ("La plü"), which is the month of eclipses and of the dead, is the time when these ceremonies are usually performed. On the plains the months of the hot season are those chosen for these rites.

[346] When the bones are brought back to serve as the center of the burial ceremonies, they are placed in a little basket and set within a small enclosure. In the Pegu Hills they are put under a small canopy, but on the plains the receptacle for them is made in the form of a miniature pagoda ("hko so law") or a little hut ("hko saw"). The hut is a model of a house with its ladder, water pots, etc. The basket containing the bones is put into the hut, and one end of a string is tied to the basket and the other let down into a water jar under the miniature house. This arrangement makes it possible for the "k'la" of the deceased to go down for a drink whenever it is thirsty. Early in the morning one of the elders carries a firebrand out to the hut, which is usually situated outside of the village. There he lifts out a piece of the bone and heats it with the glowing brand, saying: "If you are hot, sit by the fire." Then he pours water over it and tells it to drink and bathe, if it is cold. This he does in turn with each fragment of the bone. Finally, he puts the firebrand under the hut, calls back his own "k'la," and returns home. On top of the hut an image of a parrot is left, in case the deceased is an unmarried person; but for married persons two such images are set up. These birds are supposed to help carry the spirit of the deceased to its next abiding-place. As long as the bones are in the hut the friends take food to the "k'la" every day.

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Photo by Dr. Bunker

A BWS KAREN PRISON

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A HUT ERRECTED IN A FOREST CLEARING BY A SELF-STYLED PROPHET AS THE
CENTRE OF A NEW KAREN RELIGIOUS CULT OF SHORT DURATION

FEASTS TO THE "BGHA"

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little holes in the covering and inserts short pieces of bamboo down into the pot obliquely, so as to hold the cover on. He then pours water in through these holes. He now makes a sort of standard, called "thi keh," out of a strip of bamboo. The bamboo is split into three strips, but not entirely separated. They are bound together at three points with withes, and then the two outer ones are broken between the bindings but only enough to make them stand out like arms akimbo. The lower ends of each of the side strips are bent out and then brought back and inserted in a hole, or under the lowest withe around the stock. This is set in the pot. What the significance of this is, neither my informant could tell me, nor do the reference books help one to find the meaning of it.

When the food has been cooked, the husband empties the rice on one tray and the pork on another; and the members of the family—father, mother, and the children in succession according to their ages—each take a morsel from both trays. Then the father takes a swallow from a pot containing water or liquor, being followed by the others in due order. He also pours out two cups of the liquid for the ancestors of the family and throws the rest away. He collects into a bundle the withes used in tying the feet of the pig and hangs it on the end of one of the floor joists at the rear of the house. Finally, he washes his hands and returns to join his family in finishing the feast.

In case the grandparents are living, they are summoned to the "Bgaha" feast and arrive on the evening preceding the event. After breakfast next morning the preparations are made much the same as described above, but include the providing of three little bamboo cups ("maw") and the construction of a tiny model of a house ("hi hpo hkeh") about a foot long, which is set in front of the pig and in which the favorable gall-bladder of the animal is placed, together with its heart and the lung and kidney of the side that has been stabbed. The organs of the other side and any blood remaining in the abdominal cavity are placed on a tray. Only the flesh of the stabbed side is used at once. While it is cooking, the wife pounds some rice, moistened with a little water, until it is reduced to fine flour. Two of the cups are filled with a mixture of this flour, chopped pork, and a little blood, and hung over the fire to cook. The wife washes the intestines of the animal, while her husband arranges the "thi keh" as before and dishes out the food for the family. When all is ready each member of the household partakes of a morsel and

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A CHRISTIAN VILLAGE SCHOOL, PEGU DISTRICT

There are more than a thousand village chapels in Karen villages throughout Burma, built entirely by the villagers themselves.



THE CHAPEL AND SCHOOLHOUSE OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST
MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, THABAWADDY DISTRICT

One-fourth the cost of this building was contributed by the
Karen Christians of the district.